



Statement of Senator Dianne Feinstein  
On New Revelations about the Firings of U.S. Attorneys

March 15, 2007

**“Once again, details about the plan to fire U.S. Attorneys are shifting.**

**Emails released today suggest Karl Rove clearly had an express interest in this effort – despite statements earlier this week from White House Spokesman Tony Snow.**

**This latest email also shows that the plan was discussed with Attorney General Gonzales in the final weeks of 2004, while he was still serving as the White House Counsel – again in contrast to statements made earlier this week.**

**This latest revelation provides one more indication that this was not a cursory move and instead it was a well-strategized, well-executed plan that was done with the knowledge of the Department of Justice and the White House.**

**There is a clear remedy: return the law to what it was before the Justice Department slipped in the change to the PATRIOT Act reauthorization, and continue the on-going investigation of the matter.**

**And the Senate will have the opportunity to make its voice heard on Tuesday morning.”**

The Senate will begin consideration of a measure sponsored by U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) to ensure Senate confirmation of U.S. Attorneys (S.214).

There will be 6 hours of debate on Monday and Tuesday, evenly split. Votes are scheduled to begin no later than 11:30 a.m. on Tuesday, March 15.

**Background**

Under a provision inserted without notice into the USA Patriot Act reauthorization last year, the law was changed so that if a vacancy arises, the Attorney General may appoint a replacement for an indefinite period of time – thus completely avoiding the Senate confirmation process.

Senator Feinstein introduced legislation to restore the process in place before 2006. It would allow the Attorney General to appoint interim U.S. Attorney for 120 days. If after that time the President has not sent up a nominee to the Senate and had that nominee confirmed, then the authority to appoint an interim U.S. Attorney would fall to the district court. This was the law from 1986 to 2006.

The legislation was approved in the Judiciary Committee last month by a vote of 13-6.

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